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REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PERSONNEL, 1949

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PERSONNEL,
Washington, D. C., October 3, 1949.

HON. CHARLES F. BRANNAN,
Secretary of Agriculture.

DEAR MR. SECRETARY: I respectfully submit the following report of personnel administration in the Department of Agriculture, covering the period July 1, 1948, through June 30, 1949.

Sincerely yours,

T. ROY REID,
Director.

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INTRODUCTION

In retrospect, the 1949 fiscal year has been a period of progress and improvement in the Department's personnel operations. It was a year of fairly normal activity which permitted attention being directed toward improving and increasing the effectiveness of functional operations. The turnover rate was slightly below that of

previous years, and the technicians responsible for personnel work in the Department were more experienced and better trained than for any period since prior to the last World War.

Representatives of the Civil Service Commission spent some time in the Department during the year for the purpose of inspecting personnel operations. The Commission's letter commenting upon this inspection, which covered personnel operations in 22 agencies and the staff office, was most gratifying since it characterized their findings as being highly satisfactory, specifically mentioning the Department's high degree of conformity to regulations.

SIMPLIFICATION PROGRAM

Requirements affecting personnel operations have grown from year to year. They arise by reason of laws, Executive orders, Civil Service Commission regulations, decisions of the Comptroller General, Bureau of the Budget regulations, and regulations of other external authorities, as well as from Department and agency requirements. Regulations affecting the work of personnel officers and personnel technicians have become voluminous. Procedures to be followed, in many cases, are complicated.

The Office of Personnel and personnel officers have, from time to time, attempted to simplify requirements and procedures as part of the everyday job. However, during the year, it was decided that a concerted effort to stop the trend of more and more regulations and to simplify procedures was warranted. In December 1948, the Office of Personnel and agency personnel officers jointly started a program to eliminate all nonessential procedures and define minimum requirements; determine how, when, and by whom all essential steps can be taken most effectively and efficiently; and simplify procedures in written regulations and in the doing to the greatest possible extent. Early in the organization of the program, the Civil Service Commission was informed of our plans. The Commission responded that it would cooperate in any way possible and it designated specialists to work with the Office on various subjects that were to be studied.

The following example indicates the nature of the simplification effort.

Analysis revealed that in the preparation of an ordinary fan-fold, existence of any one of approximately 100 factors required that some information be furnished under the caption "Remarks." The simplification recommendation requested the elimination or modification of this information in 88 types of cases. It was noted that the information requirement was imposed in 48 types of cases by the Department and in the remaining 40 by the Civil Service Commission. After consideration, the Department eliminated or modified the information required under "Remarks" in 48 types of cases, and the Commission did the same for 32.

Recommendations are carefully reviewed by this Office after full discussion with personnel officers. The Office approves or disapproves recommendations and when necessary presents them to higher authority.

During the first 6 months of the program, 111 recommendations were received. They ranged from routine procedural matters to important legislative matters. Action on the great majority of them has already been taken.

MANAGEMENT IMPROVEMENT AND MANPOWER UTILIZATION PROGRAM

The Office of Personnel continued its cooperative relationships with other staff offices to promote the Department's Management Improvement and Manpower Utilization Program. A representative of this Office served as chairman of the Program's executive committee during the last half of the fiscal year.

The objectives of the Management Improvement and Manpower Utilization Program are to reduce costs, save manpower, simplify procedures, save materials, speed operations, and improve organization. The Program attempts to stimulate agency management improvement activity and to provide helpful written guides and expert technical assistance to the Department's agencies.

The main features of the Program include management improvement reports which represent a systematically documented record of achievements, periodic discussions with agency management officials for the purpose of identifying agency problems, and dissemination of management improvement suggestions which have been adopted. Closely integrated with the Management Improvement and Manpower Utilization Program is the system of making cash awards for employee suggestions. A member of this Office serves on the Suggestion Awards Board which develops standards for awards and procedures to be carried out by the agencies under delegated awards authority.

LEGISLATION

The following laws which directly affected personnel administration in the Department were passed during the year:

Public Law 900, approved July 3, 1948, provided for an increase in compensation of \$330 with lifting of the ceiling limitation of \$10,000 provided by the pay acts of 1945 and 1946 to \$10,330. It increased hourly employees' pay 20 cents per hour.

Public Law 38, approved April 6, 1949, dissolved the Regional Agricultural Credit Corporation and transferred the personnel of the Corporation and those in the Farm Credit Administration engaged principally in the work of the Corporation to offices and agencies designated by the Secretary.

Public Law 85, approved June 7, 1949, amended the Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act. It increased the number of members of the Board of Directors and fixed their compensation at a rate to be determined by the Secretary, not in excess of the maximum of the Classification Act of 1923, as amended, or if holding any other position under the Federal Government, the salary of the other position as they may elect. The law provided for an advisory board of five members to be appointed by the President and to serve at his pleasure, the compen-

sation of the members of the advisory board to be \$50 per diem when actually employed, together with necessary traveling expenses.

Public Law 92, approved June 9, 1949, provided that officers and employees while traveling on official business should be allowed a per diem allowance to be prescribed by the agency not to exceed the rate of \$9 within the continental United States and 7 cents per mile for the use of privately owned automobiles.

Public Law 98, approved, June 10, 1949, provided that any officer or employee who has completed less than 20 years' civilian service may elect to forfeit his right to an annuity under the Retirement Act and elect to receive the amount credited to his account if the separation was voluntary or the total amount of deductions if the separation was involuntary.

Public Law 123, approved June 24, 1949, amended the Retirement Act to provide that employees can at their option deposit in the retirement fund money sufficient to cover periods of time when no deductions were made due to error on the part of the employing agency.

HOOVER COMMISSION REPORT

The personnel management report submitted to Congress on February 9, 1949, by the Commission on Organization of the Executive Branch of the Government, more familiarly known as the Hoover Commission, was considered to determine the possible effect of the recommendations made therein upon organizational activities and personnel administration in the Department.

An analysis was made and a report prepared which divided the personnel recommendations into three categories. The first category consisted of recommendations which, if adopted, would have a considerable impact on the Department's operations. The second type could be considered as having or not having some impact on the Department's operations, depending on the manner in which the laws or recommendations would be written when enacted or put into practice, and the third included those recommendations that were already in operation in the Department.

ORGANIZATION

There were no major reorganizations in the Department during the fiscal year. However, included in 84 changes which were analyzed and approved was one involving the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation, in which claims and sales-management work were given divisional status, and another, which transferred the assets and liabilities of the abolished Regional Agricultural Credit Corporation from the Farm Credit Administration to the Department.

HONOR AWARDS

Continued emphasis by this Office has resulted in a steady growth of the Honor Awards Program. During the fiscal year, 5 individual

Distinguished Service Awards were made, 53 individuals received Superior Service Awards, and 17 units received Superior Recognition. Employees who received Length of Service Awards included 40 who had 40 years of service with the Department. A new feature of this year's awards was the fact that bronze plaques were requisitioned for use in connection with unit awards, instead of the individual gold or silver medals formerly used.

EMPLOYMENT

The average total as well as the average full-time employment during the 1949 fiscal year increased slightly over that of the previous year. At the same time there was a slight decrease in the average turnover figure as compared with 1948.

The program of conversion to civil-service status was practically completed with respect to the professional, scientific, and technical positions in the Department. Whereas under our agreements with the Civil Service Commission these are the only positions for which we have examining responsibility, we have undertaken on a somewhat limited scale to give examinations for certain trades, crafts, and other positions that are not strictly peculiar to agriculture. The lag in the conversion program is confined almost entirely to positions of this type and to the clerical, typing, and stenographic positions.

During the year there was considerable activity in connection with the placement of employees who had been affected by reduction in force in the previous year, but whose rights of placement extended well into the 1949 year. However, reductions in force that occurred in 1949 were of a minor nature.

Opportunities for Career Service in the United States Department of Agriculture

The Office of Personnel prepared Miscellaneous Publication No. 675, Opportunities for Career Service in the United States Department of Agriculture. This publication contains general information concerning employment in the Department of Agriculture, description of the work of the various agencies of the Department, and information concerning specific employment opportunities. Distribution was made to colleges, universities, libraries, State organizations, and to others throughout the country. The publication is serving the purpose of a useful recruitment tool, as well as a medium of presenting information concerning the Department of Agriculture to persons interested in types of positions in the Department.

Career Program

With the aid of agency representatives, the Employment Council, the Personnel Officers' Advisory Committee, Field Placement Committees, and others, the Office of Personnel developed a statement of plan and policy for a career program in the Department. The underlying principle of this plan and policy is based on the fact that the

agency programs constitute the cornerstone of a Departmental program. Therefore, initial emphasis has been placed on the development of agency programs for which basic principles and guides have been outlined. This will be followed by the development of a Department-wide program.

Probational Trainee Program

This type of program was started in a small way last year and has been developed during the 1949 fiscal year to such an extent that several hundred trainees have been appointed. Under this plan, undergraduate students are given probational appointments to subprofessional positions for work during summer-vacation periods and upon graduation become eligible for appointment to professional positions without further examination. This program gives the employing agency the opportunity to train and observe employees before they are given permanent appointments to professional positions and makes possible the careful selection of outstanding students, all within the framework of the Civil Service Commission examination program.

Decentralized Examining Program

The decentralized examining program was developed during the year to a point where, for the first time since before the war, the Department has been substantially able to meet recruitment needs for most professional, scientific, and technical positions. The Junior Agricultural Assistant examination is, of course, the most important examination for initial recruitment. The preexamination recruiting program has been developed to the extent that the number of successful competitors has for most options far exceeded employment needs. A detailed study was made of the activities of field recruitment representatives. Based on the outcome of this study, plans have been made for still further improvements in the preexamination recruitment program. While considerable progress has been made in speeding up the examining program, there is still much to be done in the central office examinations. Effort to improve this situation is continuing.

During the year the Office of Personnel conducted a detailed study of operations and costs of the eight field boards of examiners. As a result, a detailed and itemized statement of cost was prepared as well as a report on the operation of the boards with recommendations suggesting improvements in those operations. The Civil Service Commission informed the Department that this was the first study and report of its kind that has been made. It is believed that as a result of this study, substantial reductions can be made in cost of operation of field boards and at the same time improvements in operations can be achieved.

Retirement Counseling

The Office developed a system of retirement counseling under which retirement advisors were designated in each location where a numerically significant group of employees were headquartered. A detailed analysis of the Retirement Act was developed in the form of alphabetical cards which were furnished to each retirement advisor for training

and reference purposes. The Civil Service Commission has developed an excellent handbook which the Department's advisors also use in their work.

TRAINING

The manner in which the Department of Agriculture serves the public depends on the ability of the Department's employees to perform the duties to which they are assigned. To give efficient service to the public it is necessary that employee training be carried on continuously. The direct purpose of this training is to increase the efficiency of the Department.

We have adhered closely to the policy within the Department that management, in the final analysis, is responsible for training. Our training staff, therefore, devotes most of its time to the task of helping management, through agency personnel and training officers, to plan and give that training which will increase effectiveness of operations and result in satisfied employees.

One means of assisting agency personnel and training officers in rendering more effective service to the management of their respective agencies was the formation during the past year of a training officers seminar comprised of representatives from the 26 agencies of the Department who are responsible for the training functions in their respective organizations. Another responsibility carried out with respect to training has been assistance to agencies in selecting and developing training officers. This Office also furnishes leadership for the Department Training Council which was organized to review and decide upon general training policies and programs for the Department.

Orientation Training

The Office assisted agencies, both in Washington and the field, in planning and carrying out effective orientation programs for new employees. Regular Department orientation meetings were held in Washington to give new employees information on the history, organization, and functions of the Department and a better understanding of its operation.

Secretarial Training

The Office worked with the agencies in developing methods, plans, techniques, devices, and material for use in secretarial training programs. It also assisted the agencies in determining training needs and in developing programs to meet their specific needs; developed self-teaching devices and materials such as typing, speed-spurt drills, timed writings, corrective drill exercises, specialized shorthand words and phrases, and pertinent dictation materials relating to specific jobs both in Washington and field offices.

Supervisory Training

Since the supervisor is the key to good management, emphasis on the importance of supervisory training was continued. The Office worked very closely with agencies of the Department on plans,

methods, and materials for supervisory training programs to meet each agency's specific need. Since the conference leadership training program was initiated in 1945, 2,350 supervisors have been trained in the principles of "How to Prepare for and How to Lead a Meeting."

Administrative Management Training

The second administrative management training program was successfully conducted during the fiscal year. Twenty-six representatives from 14 agencies of the Department participated in the 8-week training program. This Office took the leadership in developing plans and materials, in arranging for speakers, and in assisting agencies in the selection of candidates.

Research Training

The joint Committee on Training for Government Service, composed of representatives of the Association of Land-Grant Colleges and Universities and the Department of Agriculture, held two regular meetings in the past year at which recommendations were made as to the types of training college students should have to best fill positions in the Department. Attention was given at the April meeting to training for international economy, training for research management, employment of students and faculty during summer months, and development of legislation to permit the exchange of employees of the Department and students or faculty members of educational institutions. The need for trained personnel in the area of marketing research continues to be of major concern. A subcommittee of the joint committee is assisting with current and long-time needs for personnel and training in the area of marketing research.

Research Intern Training

This program was developed in cooperation with the Association of Land-Grant Colleges and Universities, the Secretary's Committee on Internship Cooperation, and the Graduate School of the United States Department of Agriculture. It was designed to bring into the Department for a period of 1 year or more, outstanding graduate students for assignment to research projects on a basis that would allow them academic credit for the work done in the Department. Fifty-five internship opportunities were established and brought to the attention of educational institutions in which qualified graduate students might be expected to be found. Nineteen nominations were submitted by the colleges and 7 appointments were made. Since this was a new program and there was a great deal of competition for the services of outstanding graduate students, it is felt that the results were highly satisfactory.

Publications

A special committee of the Department Training Council developed a program in the area of "Human Relations—Dealing With People"

for use throughout the Department. The publication includes a policy, specific objectives, and a suggested plan of action.

The Office furnished leadership for the Department Correspondence Style Manual Committee in revising the manual. More than 100 suggestions were considered and the manual was completely rewritten, edited, and submitted to Government Printing Office for printing. Plans for instructing employees in the Department and field offices in the changes in the manual were developed.

The pamphlet Preventing Writing Accidents, based on the revised Flesch readability formula, together with plans for extensive training throughout the Department to assure writing that is brief, simple, and easy to read was developed.

USDA Clubs

The first USDA Clubs were organized in 1920. Since that time they have continued to assist field employees to have a better understanding of the work of all agencies of the Department and to improve their service to the public. There are now 86 USDA Clubs located in 40 States and Puerto Rico. USDA Clubs were organized at Alexandria, La., Nashville, Tenn., Raleigh, N. C., and Harrisburg, Pa., during the fiscal year 1949. The Office of Personnel continues to give service to the USDA Clubs through assistance with program plans, scheduling speakers, and recommending projects that local clubs carry out to help employees render more effective public service.

Training Film

The film, A Decision for Bill, and a set of charts, Guide to Broader Understanding and Better Public Service for USDA Employees, have been used extensively in the past year in Washington and field offices to inform employees of the broad scope of the work of the Department and the importance of each employee in carrying out this work. This film and set of charts have also been used widely in acquainting college students and faculty, foreign visitors and others with the Department's many activities.

CLASSIFICATION

Studies of proposed revisions of the Classification Act and suggestions to increase the effectiveness of classification principles were the subject of a number of reports which were made for the Bureau of the Budget and the Congress.

The field work and post-audit program of the Office continued active during the fiscal year. Post-audit surveys were conducted in 5 States and covered approximately 750 positions. On the majority of post-audits, representatives of the agencies involved accompanied the member of the Office assigned to making the audit.

Wage and Salary Administration

Just prior to the fiscal year, legislation was passed governing the payment of salary differentials to employees stationed outside the 48 States and the District of Columbia. Although the enforcement of

these regulations is assigned to the State Department for employees in foreign areas and the Civil Service Commission for employees in territories, members of this Office worked with representatives of both of these agencies in the preparation of the initial instructions and later developed regulations governing the payment of differentials to our own employees.

The Office worked with the Interdepartmental Committee engaged in developing a bill which would govern hours of duty and overtime and other special pay of customs inspectors, immigration inspectors, public health inspectors, plant quarantine inspectors, animal quarantine inspectors, etc., at our various ports of entry. The proposed bill would affect employees of the Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine and of the Bureau of Animal Industry. The bill is intended to provide uniform treatment in the matter of pay and hours for the various classes of inspectors employed by the different departments of the Government concerned with the regulation and control of movements of persons, animals, plants, freight, mail, etc., in and out of the country.

The Civil Service Commission in 1949 removed from the provisions of the Classification Act those classes of positions involving multilithing, mimeographing, and other types of duplicating work. Members of this Office worked with the Interdepartmental Lithographic Wage Board in making provisions to handle the wage work for these classifications of employees. The Board was reorganized to give representation to more agencies and it subsequently made wage surveys and developed standards for evaluating the various duplicating positions coming under its jurisdiction.

Three new wage boards were established and uniform titles and grades were developed for all classifications of positions used in the Department for which wage rates are set by wage boards or other administrative procedure. It is anticipated that these definitions will be of considerable help to the agencies in their wage administration work.

Specifications

This Office assisted and worked with the Civil Service Commission in the development of class specifications for approximately 80 series of positions during the fiscal year. The majority of these specifications have now been published. This Office's participation in the Commission's specification program consists of arranging and conducting conferences, securing and furnishing background information, and in reviewing tentative drafts of specifications, and submitting suggestions and recommendations for their improvement.

Considerable time and effort was given to bringing to the attention of agency personnel and operating people the importance of the new position specifications. The response of these people to the program has been gratifying and we have received very good cooperation from the agencies. As a result, it is believed that the specifications that have been recently issued by the Civil Service Commission are much more usable and have more value to operating people in the agencies.

PERSONNEL RELATIONS

Plans for establishing field efficiency rating boards of review were approved by the Civil Service Commission and were put into effect during the fiscal year. Elections to obtain employee members of the boards were held in areas where the Department had concentrations of 500 or more employees. In locations having 100 to 500 employees procedures were established for special elections at the time of appeal. In all locations throughout the country having less than 100 Agriculture employees efficiency rating appeals were heard by special *ad hoc* boards established for the particular appeal. The field board system affords each employee an opportunity to appear in person before the board to present his case. This results not only in a better satisfied employee but greatly decreases the time required to adjudicate these appeals.

Appeals which formerly took many months because of many written submissions by all parties are now adjudicated in a matter of weeks. This system has also worked well in connection with Public Law 623, since this law requires that employees successfully appealing a removal or suspension be compensated for the time for which no compensation was received. The installing of the field board system with the increased speed of handling appeals has saved and will save the Department a considerable amount of money for salaries which might otherwise have to be spent during prolonged appeals.

Grievance Procedures

The revised grievance procedures of the Department provide for both informal and formal handling of grievances. Many employees used these procedures throughout the year to present their complaints. Through the use of the informal procedures provided, employees' complaints and grievances were settled without the establishment of formal boards. The rapid adjudication of employee grievances through these informal procedures prevented a lowering of morale and an impairing of efficiency of employees having such complaints.

Employee Councils

Preliminary work and planning for the establishment of Employee Councils was carried out. These councils, when formed, will be composed of elected employee members who will assist the Personnel Director and other administrative officials in the formulation of policies affecting employees.

Safety

The increased emphasis being placed on accident prevention in the Department has resulted in injury rates being reduced. The Forest Service completed the fiscal year with only one fatal injury, that one occurring on July 9, 1948. In addition to the reduction of fatalities, the Forest Service reduced the number of injuries per million man-

hours approximately 25 percent. Other agencies carrying on high-hazard operations also reported reductions in the number of injuries per million man-hours worked, the Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine and the Bureau of Animal Industry being the principal ones.

In 1949 it became apparent that the hot-weather policy which had been in effect during the war was no longer satisfactory since various agencies of the Government were releasing employees under different circumstances. This resulted in the Federal Personnel Council establishing a recommended policy which the Department adopted. Official testing stations were established throughout the buildings in Washington, resulting in a more systematic and equitable manner of releasing employees during extremely hot weather.

The review of manuscripts of Department publications from a safety standpoint was somewhat heavier during the fiscal year. This resulted in the inclusion of safety recommendations where deemed necessary in all that were published. The extremely rapid advance made during the past 10 years, particularly in the development of new chemical compounds for fumigation and sterilization, has increased the importance of this phase of our work. A considerable amount of new safety information which will benefit the work of the Government and of the Department was developed.

At the request of the Chairman of the Federal Committee on Highway Safety, reports were obtained from all agencies and a Departmental report on highway safety was made to the President's Highway Safety Conference. The report of this conference lists the Department of Agriculture as one of the three Federal departments having the lowest vehicle-accident rate.

EMPLOYEE HEALTH

The past year witnessed a gradual expansion of the services rendered by the Department's employee health program as established and authorized by the Public Law 658 of the Seventy-ninth Congress.

Treatment of Accidents and On-the-Job Illnesses

On November 3, 1948, an assistant medical officer was appointed who is directly in charge of the Health Unit in the South Building. With his services available, the Department is able to offer direct medical service within this category to the patients who call at the Health Unit for service. Where continuing or repeated treatment is required, the patients are referred to the appropriate outside medical facilities. In some instances, these referrals are made as a result of physical examinations and health appraisals.

Preemployment and Other Examinations

Formerly the preemployment examinations for the Department of Agriculture were made by the United States Public Health Service. Their work load was such that they were unable to keep current with these examinations and they requested that the physical examinations

for preemployment be performed by this Department. During the latter part of the last year, 453 of these examinations were performed.

A change was made in the procedure for the examination of individual applications for disability retirement. Employees of the Department of Agriculture in the metropolitan area who now apply for disability retirement are given their physical examination by the Department. The findings of this physical examination and the recommendation of the medical officer making it are forwarded to the Civil Service Commission with the application. Where the case is such that sufficient information can be obtained at this examination, it enables the Commission to act upon the application without further delay and markedly lessens the time between when the application is made and the disability annuity is granted.

A total of 23,743 calls for service were made by employees in the health rooms in the Washington metropolitan area last year. Of these patients 546 were treated by the medical officer in addition to the 453 preemployment examinations, 8 disability-retirement examinations, and 57 other physical examinations performed.

Preventive Programs Relating to Health

The Office initiated a survey of sickness absenteeism in an effort to locate individuals who have health problems as indicated by their sick-leave records and to identify areas that produce an unusual amount of sickness absenteeism. Services for corrective and preventive purposes when the sick-leave records indicate any health problems are now offered direct to the employee by this Office.

Immunizations

Immunizations for Rocky Mountain spotted fever were again offered to employees occupationally exposed to this disease. There was no great effort made to limit these immunizations to those who were exposed in connection with their work and 430 of these injections were given at the Agricultural Research Center, 552 at the Bureau of Plant Industry Soils & Agricultural Engineering and 64 in the South Building. Sufficient advances have been made in the treatment of Rocky Mountain spotted fever that it is questionable whether it will be advisable to continue these immunizations next year.

Federal Health Program

The pilot health program for Federal employees in the field has been established at the Federal Center in Denver. This program is functioning very well and its pattern will be used as a guide in developing other field services. The Department of Agriculture has only about 30 employees at the Federal Center in Denver, so that our actual participation in this program is limited.

Surveys of cities where there is a considerable concentration of Federal employees have been made by the United States Public Health Service. More of these surveys are to be made. Based on these surveys and the recommendations of the United States Public

Health Service, it is hoped that employee health services can be established in additional locations. The surveys covered approximately 5,000 employees of the Department.

The Department has many scattered employees in localities where there are few other Federal employees and where a full-scale health program, such as is being conducted at the Federal Center, would not be feasible. For these scattered employees, it is probable that the only type of health program that can be developed would be on a contractual basis with private practitioners or local medical societies.

INVESTIGATIONS

The Office of Personnel conducted over 200 investigations consisting of the following principal types: Suitability investigations of employees whose positions empower them to negotiate contracts and of employees occupying administrative and fiscal key positions; security investigations of employees who have access to confidential information; investigations of alleged prohibited political activity on the part of employees; and investigations of alleged misconduct on the part of employees of the Department.

Disciplinary Actions

A postaudit was made of over 200 disciplinary actions which had been processed under delegated authority, and 170 disciplinary cases which were submitted for prior approval were reviewed by the Office.

Security Clearance

During the fiscal year, 1,317 cases were processed involving security clearance for employees in the following categories: Cases where the Department requests passport for foreign travel; employees or nonemployees nominated to attend international conferences regardless of where they were held; employees who are to have access to classified material maintained by other Federal agencies; and employees designated to serve on interdepartmental committees dealing with material important to the national security. Decisions as to whether security clearance could be certified were based on record checks and inquiries conducted by the Office.

Loyalty Program

With the exception of new appointees who are the subject of full field investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Department's work as required by Executive Order 9835 pertaining to the Employee Loyalty Program, was largely completed.

Reports on new appointees who are subject to full field investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, of which there were 47, were reviewed by this Office prior to adjudication of the cases by Regional Loyalty Boards of the Civil Service Commission to determine whether it would be prejudicial to the interests of the Government to retain the appointees in their positions pending such adjudication.

AGENCY PROGRAMS

Early in the year the Bureau of Agricultural and Industrial Chemistry designated the regional laboratory business managers as regional personnel officers, and authority to approve employment actions was delegated to these field officers. With the delegation of employment authority to the field, the agency personnel division in Washington shifted its activities in connection with appointment work for field employees from a handling of appointment matters on a centralized basis for the entire agency to a postaudit of fanfold actions taken by the newly designated regional personnel officers.

Responsibility for compilation and maintenance of files on periodic pay increases, probation reports, etc., as well as other records upon which employment actions are required to be taken, was transferred to the regional offices, together with the official personnel folders for all employees outside the metropolitan Washington area.

To give further effectiveness to the decentralized personnel activities, the agency efficiency rating committee, composed of representatives from each region and Washington, was dissolved and four regional efficiency rating committees were established with authority to review and finally approve the ratings of all employees within the region.

Early in May, position classification authority was delegated to the agency personnel division by this Office. At the end of the fiscal year the agency had already made arrangements for the delegation of classification authorities to one of its regional laboratories with the expectation that similar delegations would be made to the remaining laboratories as soon as possible.

Delegation has so far been accomplished without an increase in the staff of any of the regional laboratories and with a decrease of personnel in the agency personnel division in Washington.

Two agencies of the Department, the Bureau of Animal Industry and the Production and Marketing Administration, have devoted considerable thought and effort to supervisory training during the past year. In the Bureau of Animal Industry all supervisory personnel in Washington and all officials in charge of field stations in the Meat Inspection Division, a total of 534 employees, have participated in supervisory training conferences. Similar supervisory training conferences have been used and planned for other divisions of this agency. Twenty-three other supervisory employees have participated in these training conferences from divisions other than Meat Inspection, making a total of 557 employees for the agency. In the Production and Marketing Administration a supervisory development course was planned and used for special groups. Instruction in supervision was based on results of a self-inventory examination. Phases of supervision in which the group scored lowest were given major consideration in the course.

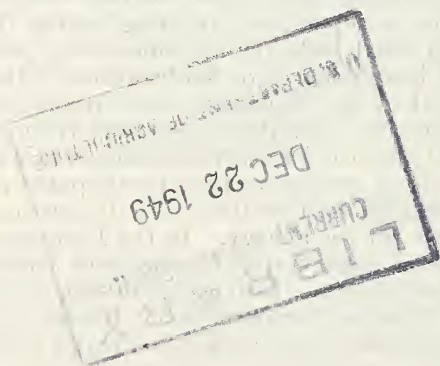
In the Forest Service special emphasis has been given to training in the field of public information and education. A training program was initiated last April which embodied a one- or two-day training conference on each national forest on the general subject of how better to serve the public, provide the public with the information

it needs, and in general improve working relations with all segments of the public. Included in this training course is instruction in letter writing, person-to-person contacts, writing news releases, and public speaking.

The Forest Service has stressed during the past year a planned program of training in fire generalship. This training course is aimed primarily at assisting new forest officers who have been assigned to responsible positions in the national forest areas. The Forest Service produced a very effective motion picture entitled "Just a Bunch of Tools" which has been used as a training aid in the training of volunteer fire wardens.

In the Production and Marketing Administration approximately 400 Washington employees engaged in a four-session letter-writing course aimed at improving the large volume of correspondence carried on by this Administration. The course was based on readability standards and on the Department's publication, Writing Effective USDA Letters. The Administration also produced a sound slidefilm entitled "Conservation—Neighbor to Neighbor" which has been used extensively in training county committeemen in attitudes and philosophy of the agricultural conservation program.

The Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine carried on basic exploratory work in advanced methods of training field crews for the purpose of increasing their skill to more rapidly identifying injurious plants, such as ribes.



U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1949